

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 CU-02 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 /080 W
-----181509Z 109354 /43

R 181155Z MR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3425
INFO UFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3253
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL FLORENCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME4439

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: COMMUNIST CENTRAL COMMITTEE ENDS--BERLINGUER ABSENT

REF: ROME 4325

SUMMARY. THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) CONCLUDED ON MARCH 16 A THREE-DAY CENTRAL COMMITTEE (CC) SESSION CALLED TO DISCUSS THE STUDENT SITUATION. THE SESSION EVOLVED INTO A BROADER DISCUSSION OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION WITH DIFFERENCES EMERGING ON HOW TO PROCEED UNDER EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES. IN THE ABSENCE OF PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL BERLINGUER, REPORTEDLY SICK WITH FOOD POISONING, SECRETARIAT MEMBER NAPLOITANO GAVE THE CONCLUDING ADDRESS IN THE NAME OF THE SECRETARIAT IN WHICH HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PCI DOES NOT INTEND TO CREATE A CRISIS AT THE PRESENT TIME ALTHOUGH THE GRAVITY OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION REQUIRES THAT THE PARTY PUSH EVEN HARDER FOR A GOVERNMENT BASED ON THE LARGEST POSSIBLE MAJORITY. SOME OBSERVERS SEE BERLINGUER'S ABSENCE AS A SIGN THAT HE PREFERS TO PRESERVE HIS FREEDOM OF ACTION RATHER THAN
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TO ENTER THE FRAY AT THIS CRUCIAL JUNCTURE. CC DID LITTLE TO CONFRONT THE BASIC PROBLEMS WHICH ARE NOW FACING THE PARTY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE DISCUSSION DURING THE NOW CONCLUDED THREE-DAY SESSION OF THE PCI'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE REVEALS CLEARLY THAT THE SCOPE OF THE MEETING WENT FAR BEYOND THE

SINGLE TOPIC OF THE NATION'S ST DENT PROBLEMS TO DEAL WITH THE OVERALL POLITICAL SITUATION. BOTH A CONCLUDING SPEECH OF PARTY SECRETARIAT MEMBER NAPOLITANO AND A CENTRAL COMMITTEE ORDER OF THE DAY REVEAL THAT THE PCI REMAINS HESITANT TO FORCE A GOVERNMENT CRISIS AT THIS POINT ALTHOUGH IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PARTY WILL SEEK TO INCREASE THE PRICE FOR ITS CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE CURRENT ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT.

2. THE ORDER OF THE DAY ADOPTED BY THE CC STRESSED FOUR POINTS: A) ALL DEMOCRATIC FORCES SHOULD BE ENGAGED IN COMBATTING THE CURRENT CHALLENGES TO THE REPUBLIC BY THE OUTBREAK OF SQUARISM; B) THE YOUTH OF THE COUNTRY SHOULD UNITE TO ISOLATE THE PROVOCATIVE GROUPS AND TO WORK FOR BASIC SOCIAL REFORMS; C) THE PARTY EXPRESSED ITS SOLIDARITY WITH ALL THE FORCES ENGAGED IN SEEKING POLITICAL AND CULTURAL REFORM PARTICULARLY AS IT RELATES TO THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR; AND D) THE NEED EXISTS TO CREATE A BROAD AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL FORCES OF THE COUNTRY IN ORDER TO RESOLVE THE NATION'S PROBLEMS AND TO OVERCOME THE UNCERTAINTY AND DECLINE PRESENT IN THE POLITICAL SITUATION, NOTING THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TURN THE CLOCK BACK TO THE PERIOD PRIOR TO LAST JUNE 20. THE POINTS IN THE DOCUMENT ARE TO BE USED AS THE FOCAL POINT FOR DEBATE IN FORTHCOMING PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL CONGRESSES OF THE PCI AND ITS YOUTH FEDERATION (FGCI).

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3. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST WAS A CONCLUDING SPEECH BY PARTY SECRETARY GIORGIO NAPOLITANO SPEAKING IN PLACE OF SECRETARY GENERAL BERLINGUER WHO WAS REPORTEDLY INDIPOSED BY AN INTESTINAL DISORDER. IN HIS PRESENTATION, NAPOLITANO OBSERVED THAT THE EXTREMISTS LEADING THE RECENT DISORDERS ARE WORKING AGAINST THE PCI AS WELL AS THE COUNTRY'S DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND THEREFORE THE PRY MUST GIVE ITS FULL SUPPORT TO THE FORCES OF PUBLIC ORDER WHICH AR ATTEMPTING TO COMBAT THESE ELEMENTS. HE ALSO OBSERVED THAT IN ORDER TO PREVENT REACTIONARY MANEUVERS IN THE WAKE OF THE CURRENT DISORDERS IT IS NECESSARY TO ESTABLICH A CLIMATE IN WHICH CONFIDENCE IS RESTORED IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND TO OVERCOME THE INSTABILITY STEMMING FROM THE PRESENT GOVERNING FORMULA OF THE NON SFIDUCIA. NAPOLITANO ADDED THAT THE PCI HAS ALWAYS CONSIDERED THE NON SFIDUCIA GOVERNMENT TO REPRESENT A TRANSITORY PHASE IN THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL HISTORY EN ROUTE TO A GOVERNMENT OF BROAD NATIONAL UNITY. HOWEVER,

HE STRESSED THAT THE PARTY UNDERSTANDS THE RESPONSIBILITY IT HAS WITHIN THE COUNTRY AND CONSEQUENTLY IS UNWILLING TO CREATE A POLITICAL VOID IN A POLITICAL SITUATION AS SERIOUS AS THE PRESENT ONE. NONTINUING, HE WARNED THAT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO MISINTERPRET THIS ATTITUDE AS SIGNS OF A POLICY OF INACTION AND UNCERTAINTY.

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INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 4439

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4. NAPOLITANO DID NOT TOUCH UPON THE QUESTION OF THE PCI RETURNING TO THE OPPOSITION. HOWEVER IT WAS DEALT WITH EARLIER BY DIRECTORATE MEMBER COSSUTA IN WORDS SIMILAR TO THOSE USED IN THE ORDER OF THE DAY. INDICATING HIS DISAGREEMENT WITH THOSE WHO SUGGESTED DURING THE DEBATE THAT THE PARTY WOULD BE BETTER ABLE TO ASSUME ITS REAL NATIONAL ROLE AT THE PRESENT TIME FROM THE OPPOSITION, COSSUTA SAID FLAT OUT THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO GOING BACK. OTHER SIGNS OF POSSIBLE DISCORD CAN BE SEEN IN THE SPEECHES OF DIRECTORATE MEMBERS PETROSELLI AND PERNA, BOTH OF WHOM SUGGESTED A MEASURE OF PARTY SELF-CRITICISM FOR FAILURE TO EXPLAIN PROPERLY THE PARTY'S LINE TO THE

MASSES.

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5. COMMENT: THE JUST CONCLUDED CC MEETING ASSUMES A MAJOR IMPORTANCE BECAUSE IT FOCUSED ON THE BROAD POLITICAL PROBLEMS NOW CONFRONTING THE PARTY. STUNG BY RECENT EVENTS, INCLUDING UNCONTROLLED STUDENT RIOTING IN ITS LONG-TIME AND MODEL STRONGHOLD OF BOLOGNA, THE PCI SEEMS TO BE SEARCHING FOR PRECISELY WHERE IT HAS GONE WRONG AS WELL AS A WAY TO REGAIN THE POLITICAL MOMENTUM WHICH IT HAS LOST. IT IS FAR FROM CLEAR THAT THE PRESENT CC MEETING HAS REALLY COME TO GRIPS WITH THESE PROBLEMS.

6. BY THE STANDS THAT THE PARTY HAS TAKEN AT THE CC SESSION IN STRONG SUPPORT OF THE FORCES OF PUBLIC ORDER, IN OPPOSITION TO THE CONCEPT OF ARMED SELF-DEFENSE BY THE MASSES, AND IN INDICATING ITS CONTINUED INTENTION TO PROP UP THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT, THE PCI STILL REMAINS SUBJECT TO CONTINUED ATTACK FOR BECOMING EVEN MORE A PART OF THE ESTABLISHMENT. TO SOFTEN THE PRESSURE ON IT FROM THE VARIOUS BASES OF ITS SUPPORT, WE EXPECT THAT THE PCI WILL STIFFEN ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT IN THE DAYS AHEAD AND TRY TO RAISE THE ANTE FOR ITS CONTINUED ABSENTEEISM IN THE PARLIAMENT.

7. ONE OF THE QUESTIONS TO ARISE OUT OF THE CC QUESTION IS WHETHER OR NOT BERLINGUER'S ILLNESS WAS OF A DIPLOMATIC NATURE. THERE ARE SOME INDICATORS TO SUPPORT THE THESIS OF THOSE THAT CLAIM IT WAS NEEDED DIPLOMATIC AMONG THEM THE FACT THAT HE HAD NOT EVEN PREPARED A SPEECH, OBLIGING NAPOLITANO TO PREPARE ONE FOR HIMSELF HASTILY UTILIZING POINTS BERLINGUER ALLEGEDLY WOULD HAVE MADE. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT GIVEN THE PRESENT MUDDY WATERS, BERLINGUER PREFERRED TO REMAIN OUT OF THE DIRECT FRAY THUS PROVIDING HIMSELF WITH A GREATER FREEDOM OF ACTION IN FUTURE MANEUVERING.

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8. FINALLY, THE CURRENT CC REVEALED THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PCI IS CONCERNED NOT ONLY ABOUT RECENT EVENTS BUT ALSO OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF A RIGHT-WING REACTION SETTING IN. WHILE WOUNDED AND UNDER A MEASURE OF ATTACK,

ONE SHOULD NOT ASSUME THAT THE CURRENT ILLS OF THE PCI ARE NECESSARILY SEVERELY DEBILITATING. WITH ITS STRONG DISCIPLINE AND THE CONTINUED POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY, THE PARTY STILL HAS MUCH ROOM WITHIN WHICH TO MANEUVER AND MANY CARDS TO PLAY. NEVERTHELESS, THE LEADERSHIP IS OBVIOUSLY UNDER PRESSURE TO SHOW PROGRESS TOWARDS THE EVENTUAL GOAL OF FORMAL PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNING OF THE COUNTRY. THUS IT CAN BE EXPECTED TO SEEK AT LEAST SOME FORWARD MOVEMENT TOWARD THIS END BEFORE TOO MUCH MORE TIME ELAPSES, FOR TO REMAIN IN THE CURRENT POSITION OF ONE FOOT IN AND ONE FOOT OUT CAN ONLY INCREASE THE CONTRADICTIONS THAT ARE PRESENTLY TROUBLING THE PARTY. FROM OUR VANTAGE POINT, THE MOST LOGICAL NEXT MOVE OF THE PCI WILL BE TO PUSH TO ENTER A LEGISLATURE MAJORITY BASED ON A COMMON PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD BETWEEN THE PARTIES OF THE SO-CALLED DEMOCRATIC ARC. BEAUDRY

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